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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No.: 09/442,233

Group Art Unit: 3627

Filing Date: November 18, 1999

Examiner: G. Estremsky

Applicant: John A. Helgenberg et al

Title: LATCHING SYSTEM

Attorney Docket: TN167

Director of Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231RECEIVED
JAN 23 2002
GROUP 3600RESPONSE INCLUDING ELECTION OF SPECIES

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed August 3, 2001, requiring election of species, Applicants provisionally elect the species identified by the Examiner as Group I. Discussion of the identification of the claims belonging to Group I is set out in detail below.

Applicants note that the Examiner did not specifically indicate the presence or absence of a generic claim(s). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 14, and 19 are generic claims in the instant application, since such claims read on each of the identified species (i.e., Figures 1A, 1B, and 1C), include "no material element additional to those recited in the species claims, and ...comprehend within [their] confines the organization covered in each of the species." (M.P.E.P. §806.04(d)). Should Examiner agree that claims 1, 14, and 19 are generic, Applicants provisionally identify claims 2-8, 15, and 20 as belonging to Group I. Thus it is further submitted that the allowance of any of such generic claims will entitle Applicants to reconsideration of claims to additional non-elected species that depend from, or include all the limitations of such generic claims (i.e., claims 9-13 if claim 1 is allowed, claims 16-18 if claim 14 is allowed, and claims 20 and 21 if claim 19 is allowed). Of course the claims of the provisionally-elected species (i.e., 2-8, 15, and 20) would also be indicated as allowed in such case.

In the alternative, should the Examiner hold that claims 1, 14, and 19 are not generic, then Applicants provisionally identify claims 1-8, 14-15, and 19-20 as belonging to Group I.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action including election requirement. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this response and this application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (215) 986-5169.

Respectfully submitted,



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DATE OF DEPOSIT: November 8, 2001

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